

Had this been so, I could not have forgotten the circumstance.

The Messrs. Newton called on me at the British Museum, in 1868, for the purpose of examining the bones of the Dodo; and the time at my command was spent in showing them those remains in one of the basement storerooms.

If this has escaped Prof. Newton's recollection, any incidental mention of the Solitaire's bones on that occasion, the only one in which I was favoured by their visit, may well have escaped mine.

The impression that no such inquiry had been made by the Messrs. Newton was fixed by their making no mention of such inquiry in their paper in the *Philos. Trans.* of 1868, from which I first learnt their interest in the subject, and satisfied it to the best of my knowledge; in giving which information (*Zool. Trans.* 1871, p. 519) no imputation of carelessness was made or intended.

RICHARD OWEN.

#### *Argas reflexus* s. *Rhynchoprion columbæ*.

Though I know not that this Arachnid has yet appeared in the British fauna, it occurs rather plentifully at Canterbury, where some of the vergers consider the creature "an insect peculiar to Canterbury Cathedral." Professor Westwood, having seen a specimen that my son took lately to Oxford, determined it as above; and perhaps that eminent entomologist may favour us with a complete account of this species from specimens that I hope to send him for this purpose. Meanwhile a notice of it will be sent by my son for the information of the East-Kent Natural-History Society, at Canterbury, where these curious creatures are locally interesting. Two of them that we kept in a tin box for upwards of five months, quite without any sort of food, were lively all the time, and would, when touched, "play 'possum," shamming death, like veritable spiders.—GEORGE GULLIVER.

#### *Habits of Tropic Birds.* By the EARL OF PEMBROKE.

"For our own part, not believing in our queen Moé as implicitly as we ought to have done, we began shooting the tropic birds as they flew over us; but we soon gave it up, for two reasons:—first, that we found that if we got a rocketer, the chances were ten to one that we cut the scarlet feathers out of his tail; and, secondly, because we discovered that, by diligent peering under the bushes, we might pick up as many live uninjured specimens as we liked. I never saw birds tamer or stupider, which tameness or stupidity may be accounted for by the extreme smallness of their brain, which is really not larger than that of a sparrow. They sat and croaked, and pecked, and bit, but never attempted to fly away. All you had to do was to take them up, pull the long red feather out of their sterns, and set them adrift again. Queen Moé was right. On Tubai you may pick up tropic birds as easily as a child picks up storm-worn shells on the sea-shore.